



Vol. 1 (1984)

Premier Issue

February 1984

Dear family and friends!

At the beginning of the new year some of our family members were breakfasting together and we got the idea to start a family newspaper. Our ideas took form and we are happy to send to you our first issue.

We have many hopes for this paper. We hope to bring family news, anecdotes and history to all of you, near and far. We especially hope that you will help by sending to us your family news, creative writing, articles about Italy, its culture and language, as well as memories from family history. Any suggestions that you may have for our paper are of course welcome.

The name "La Vigna" means "the vineyard" in Italian. La vigna is a place where family and friends gather together to share news, thoughts and affection. The grapevines themselves are a binding force as well as bearers of sweet fruit. This fruit can be made into wine if we like and if you find La Vigna a bit intoxicating that is fine with us. We certainly hope it will be warming and refreshing.

Don't be surprised when you find one of our grapevines peeking out of your mailbox in April. In the meantime we hope to find some new leaves from you to put in La Vigna.

Happy New Year, Happy St. Valentine's Day and Happy Reading.

Affettuosamente,

Corinne Bilancio and La Vigna staff

HOT FOR HEDDA

The steamy love-knot of Henrik Ibsen's Hedda Gabler will be revealed in an upcoming production directed by Francis P. Bilancio. Performances will be February 23, 24, 25 and March 1, 2 and 3. This show promises to be an expose of Ibsen's classic.

Is Hedda Gabler really pregnant? Why did she marry George Tesman when her heart belonged to another? What were she and young Mrs. Elvsted doing between 7 pm one evening and 4 am the next morning, and whom were they waiting for? Why does Hedda still pack her father's duelling pistols? Can she unleash her torrid passion and harness her unbridled powers before it's too late??

This is one of the greatest plays by one of the greatest modern playwrights. Norwegian by birth, Ibsen (1828-1899) left the icy north to spend 27 of his most fruitful years away from home in Dresden, Munich and in the warmth, color and spirit of the Italian peninsula.

With production assistance from Dean Acquaviva, Roberta Immordino, and other talented members of the artistic community, this will be an enthusiastic and fresh interpretation of the play.

This is the second show to be produced by Actor's Dance Studio and directed by Mr. Bilancio. Their first hit, Father's Day, ran last November to capacity audiences.

Showplace is the Lawrence Neigh-

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

FEBRUARY:

12	Sandi Garzio
13	Marie Armenti
	Angela Chianese Josephson
16	Lewis Bilancio

MARCH:

6	Angela Gervasio
8	Loren Armenti
24	Anthony Chianese
	Louise Chianese
25	Ralph Gervasio
26	Carol MacLeod (Immordino)
28	Pam Chianese
29	Angelojohn Chianese

APRIL:

1	Susan Chianese Slaninka
7	Joey Chianese
10	Jim MacLeod
11	Mary Armenti
14	Jane Chianese
16	Fran Bilancio
17	Leo Chianese

SEND YOUR FAMILY'S BIRTHDATES!

borhood Center, 295 Eggerts Crossing Rd., Lawrence Township, NJ. Tickets are available at the door. Admission is \$6, students \$4. For more information or advanced ticket sales call Francis Bilancio (609)883-6759 or Actor's Dance Studio (609)882-6099.

There's no reason why you, or anyone in your family should miss an exciting evening with Francis Philip Bilancio's Hedda Gabler.

Come hear the "shot heard 'round the theatrical world."

NOTES FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

I hear from Ivan that he is buying a new car. So why is this noteworthy? Let me explain.

Each time I have flown to Los Angeles to visit Ivan, he has most graciously picked me up at the airport. Carrying my luggage as we proceed through the parking lot, he begins to politely apologize for the condition of his car. "No problem," I quickly reassure him, "You should see mine."

What is unique about Ivan's car is that the window on the passenger side doesn't go up very easily, if at all--so this ensures lots of ventilation. "No problem," I tell myself, "I love fresh air!" As we ease our way out onto the notorious L.A. freeways, the wind within the car picks up noticeably. My hair is frantically whipping around my face as Ivan begins to tell me the latest news from work amidst large gusts of air. Goose bumps appear on my arms. Concerned for my comfort, Ivan insists that I wear his ex-large blue down ski jacket for protection and warmth, handing it to me as he continues to negotiate his way among the other cars. It is a warm southern California evening and a variety of air-conditioned, sleeveless neighbors zoomed by us as I put on the jacket. It even covered my ears.

Now don't get me wrong. Visiting Ivan can be one of the highlights of your life...along with riding in his car. As so often happens in the fall and winter, heavy rain storms buffet California. Now riding in Ivan's car during this time can be a real challenge. Don't worry! He is well equipped. Prior to departure he provides you with several towels. Together we carefully slam the right car door against a thick blanket covering the window area. It's perfect until we pick up speed on the highways. But one quickly learns to hold the blanket in place or else you'll need the towels too.

Once when Ivan and I were visiting his friend Liz, we really didn't notice how much it was raining until it was time to leave. The car had been left "au naturelle". As I cautiously and rather curiously approached "my side", I noticed a rather large puddle in my seat. "Oh! So what the hell!" I thought. "I wanted to go for a swim anyway..."

Yes! I'm really glad Ivan is going to get a new car. He deserves it...except I am going to miss those memorable rides!"

Roberta Immordino

GEOGRAPHICAL LINEAGE

La Vigna would like to send a special hello to our furthest West family contingent--Bob and Pauline Chianese and their children, Alex and Vanessa. On their recent trip to China, Lew and Bernice had the pleasure of visiting with Bob and family and asked us to say "Hi" in this issue.

Bob has been Department Head of English at the University of Southern California-Northridge for a number of years; he spear-headed the National Endowment for the Humanities Program there, is currently wading into the political fray in his home-town of Ventura and enjoys deep-sea fishing off the California coast. His wonderful wife, Pauline, is a registered nurse, mother and life support system for Bob and their two teenage children.

Bob has read everything and has also published his own books. He is currently preparing a series of short stories dealing with out Italian cultural heritage. La Vigna would love to give the family a taste of the work. What do you say, Bob?

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE

Corinne Bilancio
Francis Bilancio
Angelica Roberts
Clothilda Montague
Roberta Immordino
Rose Bilancio
Angelo Chianese
Lewis Bilancio
Lorraine Anthony
Henry and Tim Montague
Willie Bilancio
Lucy Gervasio
Dean Acquaviva

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A BIG THANK YOU to the following:

Julianne Wiesner-Chianese
Lucy Gervasio and family
Ira Giuseppe's patron
Lorraine Anthony and family

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Send letters to the editor to:
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Potato print
ca. 1970
Atlanta, GA
Corinne Bilancio

DEDICATION

One of the most enthusiastic and talented contributors to La Vigna would have been Louis G. Bilancio, husband of Rose Bilancio, who died on June 1 of last year. Although he cannot have any concrete role in our efforts, his presence is very much felt nonetheless in these pages and in our lives. We hope to follow some of the ideals that he carried out in his life with so much energy, grace and intelligence. Family unity and family love, a deep and learned appreciation of his Italian heritage, and the pursuit of wisdom--if we can imbue our lives and our little vineyard with these dreams as Louis did, we will have accomplished something of great worth. We are immeasurable grateful to have had his example to follow.

TRANSLATION OF A POEM OF EUGENIO MONTALE, FROM HIS COLLECTION OF POEMS OSSIDI SEPPIA (Cuttlefish Bones)

I think again of your smile, and it is for me as limpid water
glimpsed by chance between the stones of a dried stream-bed,
A little mirror where an ivy looks at her fronds;
and over everything the embrace of a quiet white sky.

Such is my memory; I would not know whether to say
if through your face is freely expressed an ingenuous soul,
or whether you are of those wanderers whom the evil of the world exhausts,
and who carry their suffering with them like a talisman.

But this I can say to you, that your evoked image
submerges capricious sorrows in a wave of calm,
and that your face slips into my gray memory
fresh like the tip of a young palm.

translated by Corinne Bilancio

Ripenso il tuo sorriso, ed è per me un'acqua limpida
scorta per avventura tra le petraie d'un greto,
esiguo specchio in cui guardi un'ellera i suoi corimbi;
e su tutto l'abbraccio d'un bianco cielo quieto.

Codesto è il mio ricordo; non saprei dire, o lontano,
se dal tuo volto s'esprime libera un'anima ingenua,
o vero tu sei dei raminghi che il male del mondo estenua
e recano il loro soffrire con sé come un talismano.

Ma questo posso dirti, che la tua pensata effigie
sommerge i crucci estrosi in un'ondata di calma,
e che il tuo aspetto s'insinua nella mia memoria grigia
schietto come la cima d'una giovinetta palma...

FRIENDS AND LOVERS

by Lorraine Anthony

On Valentine's Day friends and lovers exchange cards expressing love and affection. The day is named after two saints named Valentine. Both of them lived years ago in Rome, Italy.

Since this day is associated with symbols of love, Cupid and courtship, it should be interesting to go back a generation or two or maybe three and see how our ancestors handled love, Cupid and courtship.

The services of a matchmaker were used frequently and chaperoning was a necessary responsibility.

Of course, if the girl/boy involved was ITALIAN and CATHOLIC, this was One Big Giant Step Forward in the right direction.

In the beginning of the 19th century in Chambersburg, Nicola Bilancio was introduced to Carolina Chianese by a self-appointed matchmaker, Matthew DiMatteo. There was just one problem. Although Nicola was baptised Catholic, he was not practicing his faith. Nicola, however, convinced the matchmaker he would mend his ways and the couple continued to become better acquainted (fall in love to be more precise). Nevertheless, Nicola did not return to church and the matchmaker and family did not look upon this favorably. Eugenia, Carolina's mother, talked to Nicola and said she was not giving them permission to see each other since he would not be able to marry in the church if he did not return to Mass. Carolina, when she heard this, locked herself in her room and would not come out. After fasting and refusing her meals, the family reconsidered. After all, Nicola was a good man and he did come from a good background. His father almost became a priest himself. And above all, he was Italian. All things put aside, Nicola and Carolina were married and became the parents of seven children--Lewis, Rose, Jennie, Angelina, Sylvia, Leo and Lorraine.

Years later, after Carolina passed away, Matthew DiMatteo with a troubled conscience went to the parish priest and spoke in Carolina's behalf, of her fine reputation, and and her love for the Catholic faith. She was granted a Catholic burial.

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Let's see the reactions of Carolina and Nicola when Cupid visited their children... One day there was a knock on the door and an excited Jennie peeked out, yes it was him, the smartest boy in the sixth grade, just as he had promised. Too shy to open the door, her mother asked, "Who is it?" "Oh, Momma, it's Ralph Poveromo." "That's the boy that likes Jennie," squealed Rose.

Her mother's eyes opened wide. Why little Jennie was growing up. She smiled proudly. Then she nodded her head and started up the stairs. "Where are you going, Mom?" "Oh, if he is still there, I'm just going to throw water on his head."

About 10 years later, another caller approached the house: Jennie's first date. Jennie held her breath. There was Pop walking in his bare feet--that is to say without shoes, just socks with big holes. But even worse, one sock was blue and one was plaid. "Pop," Jennie stuttered, "a friend of mine is coming do you think you can change your socks?"

Pop glanced out the window and saw a fair-skinned blond boy. "But he is not Italian." "No, Pop, he's German." A pause. Well, this is America, isn't it? Pop went and changed his socks.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Carol and Jim MacLeod
(March 30, 1974)

Leo and Louise Chianese
(April 14)

Call of the Wild

Oh! Come rain,
Wind and snow.
We are back again
And rarin to go.



To this annual
And exciting event,
We answer your call
And say- "Present."

Al. Bilancio

IRA GIUSEPPE IS HERE!!!

In the summer of 1983, a son came to Francis Bilancio and Angelica Roberts. Born joyfully June 26 after the long suspense of pregnancy and labor, he unites the Roberts and Bilancio families. Ira Giuseppe Roberts Bilancio was named for two of his great-grandfathers--Ira, who lived to turn 98, and Giuseppe, who died this past year at 97. Ira is thriving and is happy to be with his family on this side of the rainbow.

A NEW BUSINESS IN BATH

by Willie Bilancio

Friends and relatives of Terry, Willie and William will be happy to know that they have started a new business as a result of their move to the Village of Bath, New York, and as an outgrowth of their many years of canning Italian plum tomatoes. This habit of putting food by and their expertise in this is just the background they needed for their new business. Even though they usually used the open kettle method for canning tomatoes in Fallsington, PA, the cold pack method has been put to good use in the Village where Cold is in great abundance and the bumper crop of the season from November to April. Terry, Willie and William thought about this abundance of cold and how they could help people by putting some by in suitable sized containers, ready for shipment to different parts of the country and even the world. They decided to call their product BATH-COLD.

The invigorating job of collecting BATH-COLD fell to William, who often gets up at 5:30 AM to get the best cold. The cold that is zipping around and through Bath is at its peak of coldness at this hour just before the fingers of dawn start to warm it. Sometimes William is late and must label this 6:30 AM cold a fraction of a degree warmer than the 5:30 AM cold. If he waits until 9:00 AM, which he like to do on Saturdays and Sundays, he often has to sacrifice a two or more degree decrease in the cold collected. At times it is only -9° at 9 AM.

William has developed a clever way of collecting BATH-COLD. He hangs jackets from good men's suits whose pants have worn out on a clothesline in the back yard at night before he goes to bed. When his alarm clock goes off, he leaps from bed, dresses quickly in two suits of long underwear, his blue down jacket, green insulated gloves (left by a guest), brown reindeer boots, an orange wool ski cap, and tinted goggles. He straps onto his back a scuba diver's tank of oxygen which helps him speed through the collecting and canning process. His speed assures that top quality BATH-COLD is collected at peak time. He dashes out to the clothesline, scoops up the jackets and wrings the BATH-COLD out of them into clean cat food cans which he had lined up in rows the night before in the garage to protect BATH-COLD from foreign matter which could have fallen into the cans had he placed them near the clothesline. He quickly puts the lids on the cans and seals them with pre-cut paraffin circles. A fleeting press with an old electric iron, bought in a thrift shop, completes the canning process of BATH-COLD.

In order to retain freshness and quality until ready for packing and shipping, BATH-COLD is stored in various places under a variety of conditions, which, at this time are being kept secret by Terry, Willie and William.

Tours of the entire process, with the exception of the secret storage areas, are being offered and are similar to the wine tours along Lake Keuka.

A colorful catalog is available which describes the tour and shows beautifully packaged cans of BATH-COLD, potato baskets and other delightful gifts which include this unequaled product as part of their appeal.

Send \$3.00 for your catalog--price refunded with first purchase.



Willie's mother Ruth Pugh,
Willie, Terry and William
Bilancio in balmy times.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

HISTORICAL BITS from Alphonso Bilancio

LA CUCINA (THE KITCHEN) -- send your recipes

CHILDREN'S CORNER -- we need your contributions

More news from near and afar

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US...

April 27th or 26th, depending on how you look at it, with a big white-silver full moon over a swift-moving Delaware River a couple of hundred yards away, at the stroke of midnight--a new-born woman-child completed her tenuous and lengthy voyage down Bobbi Wiesner's birth canal and looked up with new-blue eyes into the old-blue eyes of her 40 year old father, Angelojohn Chianese.

Who knows what she saw? Something for sure. The light of the birthing room was dim, not harsh; welcoming the space traveller to her new home: planet Earth. Her mother brought her genes from Ireland and Germany, a sensitive spirit, the voice of a diva, the soul of a lover of Earth's creatures. Her father gave his smiling eyes, his rhyming verse, a north-south Italian temper and spirit. Julianne, named for her maternal and paternal grandmothers, Julia and Anne, accepted all with the grace and charm that has become the hallmark of her being. Proud and joyous parents? You bet your molars!

She has some sense of where she has landed. Her father writes and delivers singing telegrams: She has been watching him and has cooed him into taking her along at 6 months old. She's been to countless in-utero rehearsals with her mom and watched her star in the Christmas opera "The Match Girl" last December. She has approached the keyboard with eager fingers and flaying feet. She has a warm spot and a twinkle for her 2-month junior cousin, Ira Giuseppe--the apple-jack cowboy, sponsored by the Fran and Angelica duet. She has been held and loved by her Aunt Rosa, photographed by her Uncle Lewis and regrets not having met Luigi before his untimely passing. She will be the beneficiary of the fruits of his labors--a multitude of loving cousins and a sense of her origins that will ground her in her being, and inspire her creations.

Her grandfather, Anthony, cannot keep away for more than a day at a time. She has appointed her Uncle Mick as her athletic director (she has received her first frisbee with instructions on handling), her Aunt Lilia as dance instructeuse and her Uncle Christopher as her accountant. She is one happy baby.

LEW BILANCIO AT HAHNEMANN HOSPITAL

Lewis Bilancio is presently at Hahnemann Hospital, Broad and Vine, Philadelphia, PA. We all look forward to his return home and a speedy recovery.

LA VIGNA

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